

CLIMBERS AND HYBRID WICHURANAS

by Al Ford

The MRS Newsletter has frequently commented on Climbing and Rambling Roses and has listed the more popular varieties. To be correct, at this point in time, we must refer to Climbers (LCI): which signifies “large flowering climber”) and Hybrid Wichuranas (HWich). A number of classifications of roses have varieties which have mutated climbing forms. There are Climbing Floribundas, for example, Climbing Hybrid Teas and Grandifloras, Climbing Polyanthas and Climbing Miniatures.

The ARS Handbook for Selecting Roses for 2003 lists a number of Large Flowering Climbers in order of rating. The list includes 19 varieties, presumably all that have earned a rating of 8.0 or above. Alas, in the list there is only one Hybrid Wichurana, **Newport Fairy** (single, pink blend, 1908). No other Hybrid Wichurana, although there are many great ones, is rated 8.0 or above.

For example, **American Pillar**, created by Dr. Van Fleet in 1902, is a fragrant, crimson-carmine Hybrid Wichurana with a distinctive white eye. It appears throughout the world and is admired wherever it is grown. This rose has stood the test of time, 100 years, but it is rated only 7.9. What a shame!

Even worse is the case of **Dorothy Perkins**, a HWich dating back to 1901. It is a white to pink variety with crimson and scarlet centers. It too is grown worldwide and appreciated for its color, form and abundance of blooms. It is growing on a fence in my backyard and when in bloom is a rose that inevitably draws favorable comments from visitors. It can be spectacular! This famous rose is rated 6.9, an insult!

The reason for the pathetic ratings of these two giants among roses is probably due to their one period of bloom, which although it lasts for several weeks, does not repeat. **Newport Fairy** is an exception to this once-blooming criticism. Strange, we enjoy other flowers in our gardens that bloom but once each year, but somehow we cannot tolerate that trait in roses. A further indication of the penalty of once-blooming is demonstrated in the case of **Dr. W. Van Fleet** and **New Dawn**. Dr. W. Van Fleet, a light pink Large Flowering Climber (LCI) introduced in 1910 is not a repeat bloomer, while a mutation of that variety, New Dawn, is. Dr. W. Van Fleet is rated 8.0, but New Dawn enjoys an 8.6 rating.

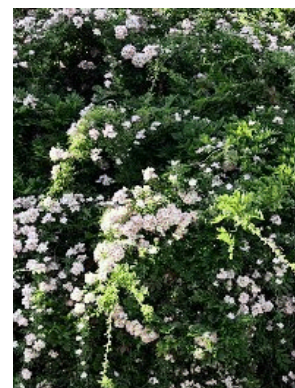
Sadly, with the exception of **Newport Fairy**, none of the Hybrid Wichuranas (Ramblers) are rated very highly. **Alberic Barbier**, a light yellow variety, developed in 1900 and **American Pillar**, mentioned above, have earned a 7.9 rating, but that's as high as these varieties are rated, with the one exception. **Dorothy Perkins** is rated at 6.9 and **Etain**, an orange pink, of fairly recent development (1953), received a 7.1 rating.

Others Hybrid Wichuranas including **Aviateur Beroit** (yellow blend, 1910), **Crimson Shower** (medium red, 1951), **Gardenia** (white, 1899), **May Queen** (light pink, 1898), **Minnehaha** (light pink, 1905), **Sanders White Rambler** (white, 1912), and **Seagull** (white, 1907), although listed, are not rated because an insufficient number of reports have been received to establish a proper rating.

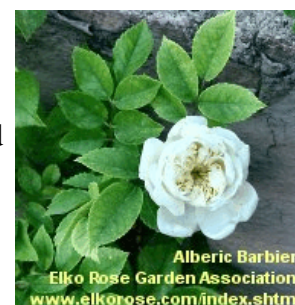
Those of the above that I am familiar with are fine varieties and should appear in more gardens than they do. Two Hybrid Wichuranas in my garden, **Gerisenda** (pink blend, 1911) and **White Tausendschön**, (white, 1913) are not listed at all, but deserve a rating, in my judgement, of 8.0 or above.

A frequently asked question by garden club members is the name of a good climber for a trellis they have or intend to have put in.

One answer, and not a bad one is to recommend one of the top rated Large Flowering Climbers. These are listed in the ARS Handbook for Selecting Roses. For the benefit of those members who may not be as yet members of the American Rose Society and thus receive the Handbook with their regular membership, the top 11 (Ratings of 8.3 or above) will be reproduced here.



Newport Fairy by K. B. Krugh
<http://logos.goodnews.net/~kkrugh/>



Alberic Barbier
Elko Rose Garden Association
www.elkorose.com/index.shtml

TOP RATED CLIMBING ROSES

Name	Color	Year	Rating
1. Clair Matin	medium pink	1960	8.9
2. Royal Sunset	apricot blend	1960	8.9
3. City of York	white	1945	8.6
4. Dublin Bay	medium red	1975	8.6
5. New Dawn	light pink	1930	8.6
6. Newport Fairy	pink blend	1908	8.6
7. Altissimo	medium red	1966	8.5
8. Compassion	orange pink	1972	8.5
9. Rosarium Uetersen	deep pink	1977	8.5
10. America	orange pink	1976	8.3
11. Rhonda	medium pink	1968	8.3



In previous years both **America** and **Altissimo** have headed the list of the highest rated climbers.

So the answer is simple, if you want the best climber (highest rated), simply find out what nursery carries it and order it for spring planting. Not quite, for there are other climbing varieties that are not listed as LCI's or H Wich's. For example, the climbing roses from Kordes in Germany are listed as Hybrid Kordesii (HKor); and then there are the Climbing Hybrid Teas (Cl HT), Climbing Floribundas (Cl F), Climbing Polyanthas (Cl Pol) and Climbing Miniatures (Cl Min).

Certainly, in selecting the highest rated climber, we should look at those from Germany. **Dortmund** (medium red, 1955) is rated 9.2, higher than any of the LCI's. Other Hybrid Kordesii varieties and their ratings are as follows:

Name	Color	Year	Rating
1. John Cabot	medium red	1978	8.9
2. William Baffin	deep pink	1983	8.9
3. Heidelberg	medium red	1959	8.7
4. John Davis	medium pink	1986	8.6



You'll find these roses listed among the Shrub Roses in the Handbook.

The highest rated Climbing Hybrid Tea (Cl HT) is **Dainty Bess**, rated 8.6. The Hybrid Tea form is rated the same. If you have ever seen this rose, I'm sure you have it. It's a beauty.

Cecile Brunner (**Mlle Cecile Brunner**) would be my choice for the best Climbing Polyantha (Cl Pol). It is light pink and is rated 8.3. Member Beth Kerr has this rose climbing a tree in her garden. It reaches 15 feet or more. A real focal point.

My choice for best Climbing Miniature is **Jeanne Lajoie**, it is medium pink in color and is rated 9.2. As member Bonnie Keller told me, you can't go wrong with this one! Pick your climber from the above and you can't go wrong.